The Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* near Ropar Wetland, Punjab, India

The Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* is a widespread Palearctic corvid distributed across Europe and temperate Asia. Within the Indian subcontinent, the species is primarily known from the Western Himalaya, with confirmed records from Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, where it inhabits wooded landscapes, forest edges, and mixed broad-leaved forests, generally at mid to higher elevations (Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Praveen 2025).

On 03 January 2026, at 1604 h, NS and SM observed two Eurasian Jays at Sadabarat Nature Trail, near Ropar Wetland, Rupnagar District, Punjab, India (30.983°N, 76.528°E; *c.* 320 m asl). The site comprised a mixed scrub–woodland habitat in the Shivalik foothills, interspersed with agricultural fields. The vegetation included scattered trees, secondary growth, and understorey shrubs, forming a semi-open woodland structure with small temporary water bodies.

The birds were initially seen perched on a fallen dry tree close to a puddle. They subsequently descended to the ground, where they were observed foraging on seeds and bathing in shallow water. The birds repeatedly hopped between low branches and the water body for approximately 15–20 minutes before flying away.

Identification of the birds was based on several diagnostic features. Both individuals were medium-sized corvids, smaller than House Crow *Corvus splendens*, with a brownish body, long tail, black bill, a distinct black moustachial patch on the cheeks near the bill, and a conspicuous blue-and-black barred wing patch bordered by white. The tail showed contrasting dark and white feathers. No vocalisations were recorded. Both individuals appeared similar in plumage, and sex could not be determined in the field. One individual was photographed, documenting the diagnostic wing pattern and facial markings **[209]**.

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209. Eurasian Jay *Garrulus glandarius* photographed at Sadabarat Nature Trail, Rupnagar District, Punjab on 03 January 2026.

A review of published literature and regional checklists, including those accessible through eBird, revealed no previously published records of the Eurasian Jay from Punjab (Grimmett et al. 2011; Rasmussen & Anderton 2012; Praveen 2025; eBird 2026). However, we found a newspaper report about one sighting from Pir Muchhalla Forest, District Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar, by Anuj Jain on 23 October 2019 (Singh 2019). The present observation therefore represents the second documented record of the species from the plains of Punjab.

The study area lies along the Shivalik foothill zone, which forms a contiguous habitat belt extending into neighbouring Himachal Pradesh, including Solan District. Such landscape connectivity may facilitate occasional dispersal of forest-associated species like the Eurasian Jay into the plains of Punjab. The present record may represent localised winter dispersal or vagrancy, a behaviour known in the species across parts of its Palearctic range (Madge & Kirwan 2024).

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A colour-aberrant Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* near Khanyan, Hooghly, West Bengal

On 29 December 2025, a Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* showing abnormally pale plumage was observed near the DVC canal (23.055°N, 88.329°E) at Khanyan, Hooghly district, West Bengal, India. The bird was found among bamboo thickets along the canal and was frequently observed perched in the open, allowing repeated visual examination.

Although the individual was detected on the first day, clear photographic or video documentation could not be obtained immediately. After several days of repeated visits and patient searching, videos (Ghosh 2025) were eventually obtained using a Fuji Finepix S8500 camera **[210–212]**. The bird's behaviour appeared typical of the species and allowed prolonged observation, facilitating confirmation of its identity, despite its unusual plumage.

A follow-up observation of a similarly pale Brown Shrike was made in the same general area on 08 January 2026. However, this could not be photographed.

The observed bird showed markedly paler plumage than normally coloured Brown Shrikes, leading initially to uncertainty in identification. However, structural features, posture, and behaviour were consistent with Brown Shrike. The wing and tail feathers appeared particularly pale, possibly reflecting reduced pigmentation during feather growth, while several white feathers were evident on the body and head. The bill and feet retained normal coloration. Following careful review of the video footage and consultation with experienced ornithologists, the colour aberration is interpreted as possible progressive greying, rather than leucism (van Grouw 2021). No abnormal behaviour was noted during the observation period.